

8-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

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MORE *than* ENOUGH

God's Strength in Our Weakness
in 2 CORINTHIANS

CHRISTINE HOOVER



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Than
ENOUGH

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EDITORIAL TEAM, LIFEWAY WOMEN BIBLE STUDIES

Andrea Lennon
Director,
Lifeway Women

Tina Boesch
Manager

Chelsea Waack
Production Leader

Mike Wakefield
Content Editor

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Sarah Hobbs
Graphic Designer

Lauren Ervin
Cover Design

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About the Author



CHRISTINE HOOVER is a Bible teacher who serves as the Women's Ministry Associate at The Austin Stone Community Church's Northwest congregation in Austin, Texas. She has authored seven books, including *Messy Beautiful Friendship* and *You Are Not Forgotten*, as well as a Bible study of Matthew, *Seek First the Kingdom*. Her work has been featured on *The Gospel Coalition* and *Christianity Today*. Christine is married to Kyle, a pastor, and they have three sons. You can find her at her home online, www.christinehoover.net or on Instagram [@christinehoover98](https://www.instagram.com/christinehoover98).

FOREWORD

The Whys and Hows of Studying the Bible

Welcome to our study of 2 Corinthians! I'm thrilled you've chosen to journey with me through the pages of the apostle Paul's most personal (and passionate) letter. Over the coming weeks, we'll discover in his writing the bedrock truth that God's presence and power are more than enough in any and every situation we face. But before we begin, let's rehearse why we study all of Scripture and detail how we'll study the book of 2 Corinthians.

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

If, as Scripture says, "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17), God fuels and feeds our faith specifically through His Word. This is why we study the Bible. We're renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit as we present and submit ourselves to His Word.

However, this growth process, doesn't happen overnight. Jesus said it happens more similarly to how a seed grows. The seed is first nestled in the ground, unseen. Then its tender, fragile sprout breaks through the soil. Over time, the plant grows sturdier and taller, roots ever deepening. After several years, the plant proves its identity as a tree by bearing fruit.

In this parable, our hearts are the soil in which the seed is planted. Jesus said that when we hear and understand the good seed of the Word, He grows a strong, fruit-bearing faith in us. To "hear and understand" the Word gives a sense of bending toward a speaker, intent on catching every word in order to obey every word.

This is why we study the Bible: we are presenting ourselves to God for our daily deposit and "watering" of His truth. The promise Jesus gave us is that by doing so, the Spirit will change us, and He will give us deep refreshment in our inner being.

This is what will happen for us as we present ourselves to God specifically through studying 2 Corinthians.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Perhaps you are new to Bible study or you lack confidence in your Bible study skills. If so, I'm glad you've chosen this study! The layout of this book is intended not only to guide your study but also to teach you how to study the Bible. The structure is based upon the following questions, which you can also utilize to study other books of the Bible.

What does the passage say?

In other words, what are the facts or truths the author is expressing?

Look specifically for the following:

- What does this say about God's character or nature?
- What does this say about God's actions—past, present, or future?
- What does this say about people, both in general and in relation to God?
- What does this say about a person's response to God's actions? In other words, what law is to be obeyed?

What does the passage mean?

Think about the passage in the larger context of the book and the even larger context of Scripture. Context often helps bring clarity to the author's intended meaning.

If there are confusing words or phrases, stop and consider them until you have more clarity. Use tools such as cross references, various versions of the Bible, and a dictionary to help provide that clarity.

How must I respond?

Allow the Holy Spirit to personalize the text. Is there something to confess and of which to repent? Something to think about or meditate on throughout the day? Something on which to take action? Something in which to rejoice?

What do I want to remember?

I find it helpful to jot down in a journal what the Holy Spirit has shown me in the text and close in prayer, asking for Him to imprint that truth on my heart and help me apply the truth in the specific way He's shown me.

HOW TO USE THIS BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

More Than Enough is designed to be an 8-session group Bible study. However, it can also be completed by an individual.

For Session 1, gather with your group to watch the introductory teaching video and discuss the questions provided in the Group Guide. There is no personal study for Session 1.

For each subsequent week, the study is designed to follow this pattern:

- Complete the five days of personal study provided in this Bible study book.
- Gather with your group and review the previous week's personal study. Also discuss any unanswered questions you have regarding the text.
- Watch the teaching video, discuss the questions in the Group Guide, and complete the session with a closing activity.

Optional Helps and Challenges

In order to "hear and understand" 2 Corinthians, read or listen to the entire book several times during the study. Look or listen for themes and recurring phrases.

I encourage you to memorize key passages from 2 Corinthians as you go through this study. You can find a list of memory verses—one for each session—on page 201 in the back of this book. You can also find them as a printable download at lifeway.com/morethanenough.

You will also find extra pages to take notes or capture group prayer requests on pages 206-207.

A NOTE TO THE LEADER

A printable leader guide is available at lifeway.com/morethanenough. In it you'll find helpful suggestions on how to best lead this study. You'll also find teaching plans for every session that include questions to help review the personal study and debrief the video teaching. Feel free to add, revise, or delete questions according to the needs of your particular group. You'll also find a closing activity for each session.



You'll find detailed information for how to access the video teaching sessions that accompany this study on the card inserted in the back of your Bible study book.

OVERVIEW *of* 2 CORINTHIANS

THE CITY

- Corinth was a **commercial center** known for bronze and pottery
- Located between two seaports on a narrow isthmus
- A **cosmopolitan city**, made up of Romans, Greeks, and a large Jewish population
- The **Isthmian games** were held here every two years
- Founded in 1000 BC, destroyed in 146 BC, and rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 BC
- At the time of Paul, the population was around 500,000



THE CHURCH

- **Paul planted the church** at Corinth on his second missionary journey and spent 18 months there
- Paul met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth, and they worked together in a **tent-making business**
- The church was comprised of Jewish and pagan backgrounds, representing a variety of social classes



THE LETTER

- The apostle **Paul** **was the author** of the letter
- Written in **Koine** ("common" or "shared") **Greek**. This was the language used in eastern Mediterranean countries from the 4th century BC until AD mid-6th century.
- **Written from Ephesus** around AD 56 during Paul's third missionary journey
- Written six years after Paul's first visit to Corinth
- Was actually the **fourth letter** Paul wrote to the Corinthian church

1. Sources for this information listed in the endnotes.



WORD
FOR
WORD

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS USED

THOUGHT
FOR
THOUGHT

AMP

Amplified
Bible

ESV

English
Standard
Version

CSB

Christian
Standard
Bible

NIV

New
International
Version

Throughout the study, we will compare verses in different Bible translations. Good online resources to compare Bible translations include biblehub.com and biblegateway.com. You can use the chart above to learn a little more about the different translations we will use in this study.

Grace TO YOU AND *peace*
FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:2

VIEWING GUIDE

A situation or circumstance in which you feel weak or helpless:

The Main Characters of 2 Corinthians

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Paul and the Corinthian Church in Six Acts

Act One:

Act Two:

Act Three:

Act Four:

Act Five:

Act Six:

Themes of 2 Corinthians

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ has practical, doctrinal, and relational implications for His church.
2. Christ's generosity fuels and motivates our own generosity toward others.
3. God's power and His glory are best displayed in our weakness.

GROUP GUIDE

GATHER

1. Pair up with another woman and choose a question from the list below to discuss together. After a few minutes, pair up with someone else and choose a different question to discuss.
 - What is the best meal you've ever eaten?
 - On what topic could you give a twenty-minute presentation without advance notice or preparation?
 - What skill do you think everyone should have?
 - What's your favorite sport to watch?
 - What's your idea of fun?
2. Why did you choose to do this study and what do you hope to get out of our time together over the next eight weeks?
3. What is your confidence level when it comes to in-depth Bible study? Share with the group how they can best help or support you as you study.

WATCH AND DISCUSS

After the Session One video teaching, discuss the following questions.

1. Which part of the video teaching did you find most interesting and helpful? Why?
2. Which of the themes mentioned in the video teaching are you most intrigued to learn more about and why? (See bottom of page 10.)
3. In the teaching video, you were tasked with jotting down a circumstance you're currently facing that makes you feel weak or helpless. Consider sharing what you wrote and how you want God to work in your life over the next eight weeks.



Session 2

More than Enough for Suffering

2 Corinthians 1–2:13

No one is immune from suffering. At some point in our lives, all of us will experience difficulties that threaten to take us under.

When facing my own times of deep suffering, the following thoughts have crept in: *This is too much to handle. I'm not sure I will make it through. Who will I be on the other side of this?*

But in those moments, I've also pored over Scripture, searching to understand the good purposes God has in allowing suffering, and exploring the good ways He responds to me in my suffering.

One of the passages I return to is 2 Corinthians 1, because there the personal experience of suffering and the truth of who God is in our suffering collide.

Paul suffered profoundly, and he purposefully began this letter by describing the extent of it. The Corinthian church tended toward believing that suffering was a sign of spiritual weakness. Certainly, they thought (as they'd been influenced to think), Paul couldn't be a true spokesperson for God if he consistently suffered so much.

On the contrary, Paul wore his suffering as a badge of honor. Christ had suffered for him, and he embraced sharing in Christ's suffering for the benefit of others. He also found in his suffering that God is a comforter and a deliverer. And not just any comforter, but the *source* of all comfort. Paul had nothing to fear.

As we begin our study of 2 Corinthians this week, we'll find that when we're suffering, God is more than enough comfort to us. He even multiplies this comfort to us in a surprising way: through one another.

DAY 1

Begin today by reading Paul's opening words in 2 Corinthians 1:1-7.

Verses 1-2 served as a typical greeting in Paul's day. Regarding these verses, keep in mind what we explored in the introductory video teaching:

- This letter was written by the apostle Paul. Paul had been called to his apostolic ministry by Christ Himself when He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul was joined in his ministry to the Corinthians by his co-laborer and son in the faith, Timothy.
- The letter was written to the Corinthian church, a church Paul founded. It seems this letter is one of several Paul and the church exchanged and is the last we have between them.
- Corinth was a cosmopolitan city in the region of Achaia, Greece.

Paul concluded his greeting with a phrase he often used in his letters—*grace and peace*. The repetitive use of the phrase emphasized Paul's hope that they would personally experience these blessings and was a beautiful reminder that God is the source of both.

However, God is the source of so much *more* than grace and peace, and in verses 3-7 Paul highlighted a characteristic of God that serves His children well in their suffering. Let's dig in.

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. After his greeting, Paul opened the letter with a hymn of praise. According to verse 3, what characteristics of God make him worthy of blessing?
2. God responds to us according to His nature (v. 3). How does He act in response to our suffering (v. 4)?

3. Aside from our own consolation, why does God comfort us in our afflictions (vv. 4,6)?
4. According to Paul, what do we have to offer others when we comfort them in their suffering (v. 4)?
5. What insights do the following verses give about the good God can bring or produce in the Christian through suffering?

Verse 5

Verse 6
6. Paul indicated in verse 6 that the Corinthians were themselves suffering. What was Paul's mindset toward them as they endured this suffering (v. 7)?

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

7. In the passage below (verses 3-7), highlight or underline the repeated words that stand out to you.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will also share in the comfort.

8. Paul connected our suffering with the sufferings of Christ. What do you think it means that "the sufferings of Christ overflow to us"? Or, as it reads in the ESV, that we "share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ" (v. 5)?

9. Paul stated that while we share in the sufferings of Christ, we also share in His comfort. Read verse 5 in the Amplified version below and circle any words that describe or illuminate what God's comfort is like.

For just as Christ's sufferings are ours in abundance [as they overflow to His followers], so also our comfort [our reassurance, our encouragement, our consolation] is abundant through Christ [it is truly more than enough to endure what we must].

10. God's comfort is what enables us to endure suffering with our faith intact and makes it possible for our suffering to benefit others. How does Scripture indicate that God comforts us? Look up the following verses and note what you learn:

Psalm 23:4

Psalm 119:76

John 14:16-17

Philippians 4:6-7

HOW MUST I RESPOND?

11. One repeated word that stands out in this passage is *all*: God is the "God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our affliction." If God is the God of all comfort, then He is the source of comfort, and we should turn to Him when we need comfort. In what affliction do you currently need comfort? Are you turning to God for comfort or to someone or something else? If to someone or something else, are you finding comfort there? Explain.

12. Describe a past affliction in which God comforted and cared for you. Who around you needs the same kind of comfort you received in that affliction? How can you share that comfort with them this week?

truth to remember FROM GOD'S WORD TODAY

Write a statement that encapsulates what you learned in the Word today. Ask God to imprint that truth on your heart and help you apply the truth in specific ways.

DAY 2

We learned yesterday that God grows patient endurance in us through the comfort He provides for His children. But that is not the only good God can bring through the fire of suffering. In today's passage we'll see how Paul drew from personal experience to paint a beautiful picture of what can happen when we share well in the sufferings of Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11.

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. What does Paul want the Corinthians to know (v. 8)?

2. How does Paul describe his affliction and how it made him feel?

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

3. Yesterday, we saw in 1:5-6 examples of how God can bring good from our suffering. What new reason did Paul offer as to why God allowed or authored his suffering (v. 9)?

4. What did Paul reveal about the character and nature of God and how He acts (vv. 9-10)?

5. Aside from God, who and what else did Paul call upon for help in his affliction (v. 11)?

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

AFFLICTION

Paul used the word *affliction* (*troubles*, NIV) repeatedly in Chapter 1 to describe his experience. *Affliction* can be defined as both external distress and an inward pressure resulting from difficult circumstances, encompassing anything from anxiety to discouragement to fear or to doubt.¹

6. The specific affliction Paul was referring to in these verses is unknown, but based upon certain accounts in Acts, we can make educated guesses. Read the following passages and note the affliction Paul described in each one.

Acts 19:23-40

Acts 20:3,19

Acts 21:27

7. In what specific ways might Christians be tempted to rely on themselves rather than God when they walk through suffering? In what ways have you been prone to trust in yourself when you've faced affliction?

8. Paul said God delivered him out of persecution and then shared his deep assurance that God would deliver him from future suffering. Can we be assured that God will deliver us from every affliction? What sort of deliverance do you think Paul had in mind?

9. Why is it so important to bring others into our afflictions and ask them to pray for us (v. 11)?

HOW MUST I RESPOND?

Paul made it evident in 1:1-11 that we share in a fellowship of suffering and encouragement with Christ and with our spiritual brothers and sisters. We engage in this fellowship with our Christian family as we share comfort, receive comfort, pray for those in affliction, and give thanks for God's deliverance of others. Paul's description of this fellowship implies that we have deep relationships in our Christian community where this kind of mutual care and concern is shared.

10. Are you engaging in this type of fellowship in your Christian community? If so, in what specific forms are you seeing sharing, receiving, praying, and giving thanks taking place? Are there any of these actions you need to be more invested in? Explain.

11. If you're not engaging in this type of fellowship, why not? What can you do to foster it? Perhaps your first step involves sharing your circumstances with a trusted person. Who will you share with this week and what specifically do you need to share with them? What do you need to request of them?

12. In your current affliction, is it possible you're relying on yourself rather than God? Explain. How could this be short circuiting what God may want to do in you? (If you can't think of a current affliction, consider a past affliction and answer the questions accordingly.)

truth to remember FROM GOD'S WORD TODAY

Write a statement that encapsulates what you learned in the Word today. Ask God to imprint that truth on your heart and help you apply the truth in specific ways.

DAY 3

In 1:1-11, Paul referenced afflictions he suffered, which likely involved severe persecution from unbelievers. But Paul also experienced suffering in the form of sharp criticism from the Corinthian believers themselves. He may have called their attention to his afflictions to remind them he had willingly shared in Christ's sufferings for their benefit.

In today's passage, he began directly addressing their myriad criticisms. We'll see his responses sprinkled throughout the letter.

Although a group known as the Judaizers are not directly addressed until much later in the letter, many of the Corinthians' skewed perspectives regarding Paul were influenced by this group. They had infiltrated the church and were calling Paul's apostleship into question. As we will see later, they had ulterior motives for tearing Paul down, and unfortunately, they had an outsized influence on the church.

The first concern Paul addressed was the Corinthians' questioning of his motives for ministry.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:12-14.

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. How did Paul and his fellow ministers conduct themselves among the Corinthians (v. 12)?

BOASTING

Although this is its first occurrence, Paul used the word *boast* throughout the letter to the Corinthians. In the wider Corinthian culture, people sought glory and honor through social status, often boasting about such things as their wealth and position to self-promote and elevate their status. Boasting was not seen in a negative light (as rude or prideful) but was widely practiced by those considered worth emulating. The Corinthian church, mirroring the current culture, had welcomed and elevated those among them who boasted, apparently seeing nothing in the practice that was contrary to Jesus's life and example.

2. Paul appropriated the cultural term and practice of boasting for gospel purposes. What was Paul's boast in verse 12 and his reason for boasting in verse 14?

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

3. What did Paul mean with his claim they had "behaved . . . with godly sincerity"? Using an online tool such as biblegateway.com, look up 2 Corinthians 1:12 in the following versions and note the words paired with "godly sincerity."

CSB

ESV

NIV

AMP

4. What does it mean to boast? When is it right and when is it wrong? Look up the following verses in the chart and list the characteristics of right and wrong boasting you find in each passage.

WHAT IS SINFUL BOASTING?	WHAT IS RIGHT AND GOOD BOASTING?
1 Corinthians 1:29	Jeremiah 9:23-24
1 Corinthians 4:7	Romans 15:17-18
Ephesians 2:9	1 Corinthians 1:31
James 4:13-16	Galatians 6:14

6. The dictionary defines *boasting* as speaking with exaggeration and excessive pride, especially about oneself.² We would call this sinful boasting. After exploring the verses above, what do you think it means to “boast in the Lord”?

7. In 2 Corinthians 1:12, was Paul boasting in himself or in the Lord? Explain.

8. Paul had only been partially understood by the Corinthians, which led them to criticize and question him. This is an affliction we too may face as we seek to follow Jesus. What insights do verses 12-14 give you as to how best to respond to being misunderstood?

HOW MUST I RESPOND?

9. Do you ever boast, even if only internally to yourself? If so, what do you boast about? What does your boasting indicate about where you derive your status and where your confidence comes from?
10. In what ways can you and will you boast in the Lord more?

truth to remember FROM GOD'S WORD TODAY

Write a statement that encapsulates what you learned in the Word today. Ask God to imprint that truth on your heart and help you apply the truth in specific ways.

DAY 4

In 2 Corinthians 1:12-14, we observed Paul defending his motives in his relationship with the Corinthians and refusing to join “the boasting game,” unless it involved boasting in the Lord. In today’s passage we discover the reason the Corinthians considered Paul insincere: they were bothered by his changed travel plans, accusing him of vacillation and not keeping his word.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:15–2:1.

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. In verse 15, Paul said he had confidence regarding the Corinthians. What was he confident of (v. 14)?
2. In verses 15-16, Paul addressed his changed travel plans. What was the original itinerary he’d communicated to the Corinthians that hadn’t come to fruition? (See also 1 Cor. 16:5-7.)
3. Why didn’t Paul keep his original plans (1:23; 2:1)? What does this tell you about Paul’s intentions toward the Corinthians and his feelings about their relationship with one another?
4. The Corinthians accused Paul of making plans according to human ways. How did Paul characterize what it means to make plans according to human ways (v. 17)?

5. Instead of making decisions according to human ways, Paul said he acted as God does: intentionally and for the benefit of others. What do we learn about the character and actions of the Godhead in verses 18-22?

God the Father

Jesus the Son

The Holy Spirit

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

6. How can we reconcile the fact that Paul’s stated plans changed with his claim that he’s kept his word and should be considered faithful? How would you explain his reasoning to someone doubting Paul’s character?
7. What do you think it means that “every one of God’s promises is ‘Yes’” in Jesus (v. 20)? What does this teach you about God the Father? About Jesus?
8. How might Paul refraining from a painful visit to the church work with them for their joy (v. 24)? What are examples of how we can work with other believers for their joy?

HOW MUST I RESPOND?

9. Are there areas of your life where you say, “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? Explain. How does this reflect on your Christian character and witness? What needs to change in order for you to better reflect the trustworthiness and faithfulness of God?

10. The Bible is full of God’s promises, all of which are true for you in Jesus. Read through the promises below and place a star next to the one you will meditate on throughout your day today. Note in the space provided how Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise.

God promises to be a refuge when I’m facing trouble (Ps. 46:1).

God promises that He gives me rest when I’m weary (Matt. 11:28-29).

God promises to work all things for my good (Rom. 8:28).

God promises He will provide for my every need (Phil. 4:19).

God promises He will never leave or abandon me (Heb. 13:5).

God promises He will give me wisdom when I ask for it (Jas. 1:5).

truth to remember **FROM GOD’S WORD TODAY**

Write a statement that encapsulates what you learned in the Word today. Ask God to imprint that truth on your heart and help you apply the truth in specific ways.

DAY 5

Begin by reading 2 Corinthians 2:1-13.

Paul poured out his heart for the Corinthians (vv. 1-11), then returned to his changed travel plans—a major sticking point in their relationship (vv. 12-13).

Today’s passage may feel a little disorienting. It’s as if we’ve come on the scene mid-conversation, as Paul repeatedly references his relational backstory with the Corinthians without giving all the pertinent details.

The relational dynamic unfolding before us shows us a portrait of Paul’s fatherly love for the Corinthians. Although he fielded some criticism from certain people in the church, he was generally sympathetic to the church’s sputtering spiritual growth and their genuine attempts to right some of their past wrongs. Out of love for the church, he was willing to endure the pain of being misunderstood or criticized by them for their eventual joy.

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. We learned about the painful visit (v. 1) and severe letter (v. 4) as a sequence of “acts” in the introductory video teaching. Using your notes on page 10, fill in the space where the painful visit and the severe letter fit in the timeline:

PAUL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CORINTHIANS	
ACT 1	Paul planted the church in Corinth and eventually left.
ACT 2	Paul and the church exchanged letters about sexual immorality in the church and other church issues.
ACT 3	Paul wrote and sent the letter we call 1 Corinthians to address these issues.
ACT 4	
ACT 5	
ACT 6	Paul wrote and sent the letter we call 2 Corinthians.

2. What reason did Paul give for writing the severe letter (v. 9)? From the context of the surrounding verses, describe the situation that required the Corinthians' obedience.

3. What emotions and motivations were behind Paul's severe letter (v. 4)?

We learned yesterday that Paul changed his travel plans to spare the Corinthians more pain after already having one painful visit and sending the severe letter. In other words, he didn't want to heap correction upon correction, potentially discouraging or crushing them.

4. Look back at 1:24:

What approach was he not taking toward them in his writing?

What approach was he taking toward them?

5. What outcome did Paul hope for in his relationship with the Corinthians (vv. 1:24; 2:3)?

6. Why did Paul go to Troas to preach (v. 12)?

7. Why did he eventually leave Troas and where did he go (vv. 12-13)?

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

Who is the person who caused Paul (and the church) such pain? We don't know exactly, but one possibility is the man mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5, who was involved in sexual immorality. Scholars suggest an additional possibility was a man who vocally and harshly opposed Paul when he made his "painful visit" to the church. Whether the first or second option, we can safely imagine Paul giving the church the same instruction about how to respond.

8. Let's look at his response to the man in 1 Corinthians 5:1-15. Read the passage and answer the following questions:

What did this man do?

How had the Corinthian church responded to the man and his sinful actions?

What did Paul instruct them to do instead?

9. What is the purpose of a church disciplining one of their members who is in unrepentant sin? (For help, see Gal. 6:1 and Eph. 4:1-3.)

10. Return to 2 Corinthians 2:6-7. It appears the church obeyed Paul by disciplining their brother in Christ, whoever he was, and the man repented of his sin. This was something to celebrate! But what seems to have happened instead? And what was Paul's instruction to the church now that the man had repented?

11. Paul said it was important for a repentant person to be met with love and forgiveness because of Satan's designs. How might Satan use a lack of forgiveness toward a repentant individual within the church community for his purposes?

HOW MUST I RESPOND?

Paul stated that he'd already forgiven in the presence of Christ the person who caused him pain, meaning he'd taken his hurt to God. God had both reminded Paul of the forgiveness given to him in Christ and empowered Paul to forgive. A person who's done the hard work of forgiving someone before they repent or ask for forgiveness has no problem expressing that forgiveness if and when it's asked for.

12. Is there someone you need to forgive in the presence of Christ? Spend time now bringing your hurt and pain to Christ and asking Him to help you forgive that person even before he or she asks.
13. Paul didn't take advantage of his authority by lording it over the church. Instead, he used it to demonstrate love and seek the benefit of those he served. What are some areas where God has given you authority? How can you use this authority to serve others rather than yourself?

truth to remember FROM GOD'S WORD TODAY

Write a statement that encapsulates what you learned in the Word today. Ask God to imprint that truth on your heart and help you apply the truth in specific ways.

Wrap Up Session Two

CONGRATULATIONS! You've finished your first week of study.

Have you noticed over the course of this week's study how steady and faithful Paul remained, even in affliction, criticism, misunderstandings, relational discord, and the church's imperfect obedience? It's not that he didn't care about his relationship with the Corinthians, but Paul's life demonstrated his belief that God is the source of all comfort. Knowing God was the source, he had not gone to his own storehouses but rather to the storehouses of God. For instance, he'd found comfort in knowing that though the church didn't understand his changed plans and had criticized him for them, Paul had followed the leading of the Holy Spirit and had been obedient to Him. Courage and confidence emanated from Paul because he sought validation and affirmation from no other source than the God of all comfort. In fact, he had been so comforted that he'd been able to serve those who had misunderstood him and caused him pain. This was a fulfillment of Paul's very words in 2 Corinthians 1:4: "He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

We serve this same God. We can go to Him, the source of all comfort, and find grace, peace, and the courage to endure in our suffering.

Take a moment to ingrain what God has taught you this week by completing the following wrap up questions.

I'm currently experiencing suffering or affliction in these areas of my life:

In my current suffering, I feel:

This week, I've learned that God is more than enough in my suffering because He is the source of all comfort. Knowing this about God, I will:

VIEWING GUIDE

Seeking _____ is a natural human response to _____.

1. God comforts us with His presence and His power in our afflictions.

To comfort is to alleviate or lessen grief, sorrow, or _____.

Affliction: External distress or an inward _____ resulting from difficult _____.

Reasons God allows afflictions in our lives:

1. Our afflictions are a means of sharing in the _____ of Christ (v. 5).
2. It teaches us to _____ and depend upon God in ways that we rarely learn apart from suffering (v. 9).
3. We are given comfort so we can _____ that comfort with others (vv.4-6).

2. God comforts us through one another in our afflictions.

Ways you can respond to others in their suffering:

1. _____ well.
2. Acknowledge the _____ of the situation.
3. Remind them of the _____ of God.
4. Be _____ with them.
5. _____ for them and with them.

GROUP GUIDE

Use the following questions to discuss the Session Two video teaching with your Bible study group. A more extensive leader guide is available as a free download at lifeway.com/morethanenough.

What are some things outside of God and His Word that you have turned to for comfort?

Christine said that God's comfort lessens the blow of affliction and gives us power to face our difficulties. How have you experienced that in the past and/or are experiencing it now?

When you look back at the suffering and affliction you've experienced, how has God used that for your good and His glory?

Christine talked about the pattern of "God > me > we > God" in explaining how we experience and provide comfort. What did she mean?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:4. What did Paul mean when he said we comfort others through the comfort we receive from God? How have you experienced this in your life?

Review the five ways we can help comfort others in their suffering. Share an example of how you have both received and given comfort in one or two of these ways.

What is your main takeaway from this video teaching and why?

